

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

1600 NINTH STREET, Room 322  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
TDD 654-2054 (For the Hearing Impaired)  
(916) 654-1884



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**CONTACT: PAUL VERKE**  
(916) 654-1884

## **FAMILIES GIVE HIGH MARKS TO STATE'S "EARLY START" PROGRAM FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS**

SACRAMENTO -- Families participating in California's Early Start program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays say the program is working, according to survey results released today by Cliff Allenby, Director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Conducted late last year for DDS by Xenologix, Inc., 96.4% of the survey respondents stated that early intervention services increased their capacity to enhance their child's development and improved the quality of life of their children.

DDS is the lead agency responsible for the program's administration, in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE).

"The results show that the program is working, from the parents' point of view," said Cliff Allenby, DDS' Director. "We will continue to work with families, the Department of Education, and regional centers to strengthen the program and build on our successes."

The program was started in 1993 to serve infants and toddlers with developmental delays and those at risk of developmental disability. The program served 31,585 children in 2000-01. Children who are diagnosed with a developmental disability may be eligible for program services throughout their lives.

A total of 1,706 respondents, mostly parents of children participating in the Early Start program, responded to the survey. Respondents' ratings of services, the regional centers, and outcomes were "above average" to "excellent", and showed little differentiation between diverse ethnic populations participating in the survey.

The survey results were released today at the State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention (ICC) at the Burbank Airport Hilton. To view an electronic copy of the survey, please refer to the DDS Home Page, [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov).

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